We must not rely on anyone's saving us, but be very aware of the fact that wrong choices make us incapable of saving ourselves. —ERICH FROMM

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THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge in himself.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

WITH the general decline, today, of faith in both orthodox religion and conventional science as sources of "truth," there is reason to look closely at what H. P. Blavatsky has said on this subject, since the teaching of the Wisdom-Religion on the question of final knowledge or truth must one day be accepted by all, and the explanations made by its great, nineteenth-century expositor are no doubt the best and clearest we can have concerning human possibility in the present historical period.

If "absolute truth" is unavailable to finite minds, what then, it is natural to ask, is possible for struggling human beings? And in what category are to be placed the extensive materials provided by the Founders of the Theosophical Movement, for the use of students? The term "relative truth" is so often used in deprecation, as in the identification of *Samvriti-satya* as "truth mixed with false conception" or "illusion-creating appearance," that there must be some further meaning of relative truth. In her article, "What Is Truth?", from which our text is taken, H.P.B. goes on to say:

Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, how-

ever differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane, we may use our mental polariscope; and, analyzing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind—that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle,* the organic brain—the animal man in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the "divine man." This is what the great adepts, the Yogis in the East and the Mystics in the West, have always done and are still doing.

Here H.P.B. offers, so to speak, an "individual" psychology, a counsel to those who seek guidance from her as teacher. It is for students. But what of the great transitions of history, of the mind of the race out in the world? Speaking to this point, we have various instructions. There is for example H.P.B.'s approving quotation (in *The Secret Doctrine* I, 298) of what H. T. Buckle says in his *History of Civilization*:

> If either a religion or a philosophy is too much in advance of a nation it can do no present service but must bide its time until the minds of men are ripe for its reception. . . . Every science, every creed has had its martyrs. *According to the ordinary course or affairs, a few generations pass away, and there comes a period when these very truths are looked upon as commonplace facts, and a little later there comes another period in which they are declared to be necessary, and even the dullest intellect wonders* how they could ever have been denied.

A little later, H.P.B. parallels Buckle's statement with one of her own:

> The evolution of the GOD-IDEA proceeds apace with man's own intellectual evolution. So true it is that the noblest ideal to which the religious Spirit of one age can soar, will appear but a gross caricature to the philosophic mind in a succeeding epoch! The philosophers themselves had to be *initiated into perceptive mysteries,* before they could grasp the correct idea of the ancients in relation to this most metaphysical subject. Otherwise—outside such initiation—for every thinker there will be a "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," mapped out by his intellectual capacity, as clearly and as unmistakably as there is for the progress of any nation or race in its cycle by the law of Karma. Outside

> of initiation, the ideals of contemporary religious thought must always have their wings clipped and remain unable to soar higher; for idealistic as well as realistic thinkers, and even free-thinkers, are but the outcome and natural product of their respective environments and periods. The ideals of both are only the necessary results of their temperaments, and the outcome of that phase of intellectual progress to which a nation, in its collectivity, has attained. (*S.D.* I, 326-27.)

Well, if this is the case—if understanding or persuasion is wholly dependent upon the degree of progress to which a race has attained, in relation to even the "relative truths" that can be communicated by the wise, or by a teacher—how, then, does "authority" apply to the matter of such communications? Plainly, the "authority," if there is any at all, can only attach to the soundness of the educational method of the teacher. The student of Theosophy cleaves to H.P.B. and reads her as the fundamental source of his Theosophical education, not because, having mastered the verbal forms of what she says, he can then turn to others and announce the final truths of Theosophical doctrine, but rather because he has grown in faith that H.P.B. wrote out of an awareness of the potentialities of human awakening in this cycle—an awareness not given in the same degree to other men—and because from her he obtains fair warning of his own need to convert the teachings she transmits into his own first-hand knowledge. This is what he finds in H.P.B., and this is what he communicates to others as the reason for studying Theosophy. It is H.P.B. the *teacher,* not H.P.B. a revealer, whom he honors and repeats.

Elsewhere in *The Secret Doctrine,* (I, 272) she points out "that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshall, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs." From this archaic record, perhaps, she begins on page one of her major work to expound the meaning of such geometrical symbols. We are invited to their study through her eyes—that is, in terms of her use of the vocabulary of our age. And what is "our age"? It represents a certain involvement of the manasic intelligence of human beings, taken collectively, in matter of a certain opacity and degree of refinement. It represents certain leading intellectual conceptions of "reality" and certain moral ideas, certain views of "truth"—which are in flux, since there is no static condition in evolution, but always a move-

ment, a cyclic tendency, a direction either up or down.

Now a teacher who speaks out of the knowledge of *initiation,* who has the purview of looking across the crests of cycles of countless millennia—who understands the juxtaposition of the middle principles of man in evolution, and the rhythm of their changing relationships—one who knows all this as clearly and as certainly as the physicians of our time know the elementary facts of physiological development in the young, is in a position to appeal to the evolutionary possibilities in the men of this cycle as no one else could. There must be a direct relation, for example, between publication of what was for the first time made known in *The Secret Doctrine* and the statement found on page 301 of Vol. II: "Our race then has, as a Root-race, crossed the equatorial line and is cycling onward on the Spiritual side. . . ."

The stirring call of her editorials, the gentle encouragement of the *Voice,* the challenge of discussions such as "The Tidal Wave" and other articles—these various communications, we may think, are set (although quite naturally) at a level appropriate to the current of aspiration and will to know in the race at this time. Something similar might be said of the work of William Q. Judge. Both he and H.P.B. wrote of the peculiar importance of the present cycle, in terms of human awakening. He speaks of the "age of inquiry" in the *Ocean;* she writes of the strengthening current of Manas in both *The Secret Doctrine* and her Messages to the American Theosophists; he, again, in an editorial in the *Path* (March, 1887) declared:

> . . . in this curve of the cycle, the final authority is *the man himself.* In former times the disclosed Vedas, and later, the teachings of the great Buddha, were the right authority, in whose authoritative teachings and enjoined practices were found the necessary steps to raise Man to an upright position. But the grand clock of the Universe points to another hour, and now Man must seize the key in his hands and himself—as a whole—open the gate. Hitherto he has depended upon the great souls whose hands have stayed impending doom. (THEOSOPHY, April, 1948.)

And in his article, "Synthesis of Occult Science," he says:

> . . . while the Secret Doctrine itself apprehends equally both philosophy and science, in addressing itself to the thought of an age it must recognize here, as it does everywhere, the *law of cycles* that rules in the intellectual development of a race no less than in the revolution of suns and worlds, and so address the times from that plane of thought that is in the ascendant. It is

> just because analytical thought is in the ascendant, because it is the *thought-form* of the age, that the great majority of readers are likely to overlook the broad synthesis and so miss the philosophy of the Secret Doctrine.

Now each individual, it must be, has also his "thought-form," his individual constellation of ideas and feelings about what is real, what is good, what is to be sought and what avoided. And all these attitudes and conceptions are strung on what, in the *Ocean,* is called the "thread of a life's meditation," which must have a great deal in common with the thought-form of his race and time, but will also have its individual characteristics, due to Karma and the choices made by him from day to day.

Yet there is also a link, another kind of "thread," between that individual and the high intelligence which is his parent-soul, his "father-fire." A sentence concerned with archaic cosmology (*S.D.* I, 265) has also an application to the developmental course of individuals: "The thread between the *silent watcher* and his *shadow* (man) becomes stronger"—with, H.P.B. adds, "every reincarnation." And this strengthening of the link between these two is surely what Mr. Judge referred to, in saying (in his *Letters* II, 72): "Hence we are not working for some definite organization of the new years to come, but for a change in the Manas and the Buddhi of the Race. That is why it may seem indefinite, but it is, nevertheless, very defined and very great in scope."

So, one might say—following what H.P.B. affirms in "What Is Truth?"—that we have to use our "mental polariscope," which means *study* of the teachings about man and nature, addressed to our race and time, while recognizing at the same time the highly individual process of learning pursued by each one, remembering also the difference between the logical and metaphysical forms taken by the idea of "truth" in our epoch, and the first-hand, inner certainty which comes from direct perception. We do what we can to preserve fidelity to the "definite words for definite things" spoken of by H.P.B. in the *Key,* but still avoid the folly of any kind of metaphysical dogmatizing. How often it is that one is moved to say, rather insistently, "But isn't it true that . . . ," when the resulting proposition takes some form of two-dimensional logic which, seen in a better light, may not apply at all. We have the excellent example of Mr. Judge's unwillingness to put the incommensurable realities of high metaphysics into any sort of strait jacket of definition:

> I am not able to give you the definition which you ask for, as it seems to me, spirit cannot be defined except in this way, that the whole universe is made of spirit and matter, both constituting together the Absolute. What is not in matter is spirit, and what is not in spirit is matter; but there is no particle of matter without spirit, and no particle of spirit without matter. If this attempted definition is correct, you will see that it is impossible to define the things of the spirit, and that has always been said by the great teachers of the past.

It is the all too human longing to get things *settled* on the plane of relative truth which leads to insistence on finality, when the only finality we can have now, on earth, lies in the persistence of the search and the willingness to recognize the impermanence of all limiting definitions.

And yet, as Mr. Crosbie has pointed out, "Many of the statements of the Teachers are axioms to be applied, while at the same time they are woven in with such reasoning as may suit the ordinary way of thinking." The latter form, one may think, is an adaptation to the "thought-form" of the age, because, as Mr. Crosbie adds, "Most people imagine and accept as fact, that there is but one way of thinking—reasoning from premises to conclusions." So, in the philosophy as we have it there is much reasoning from premises to conclusions, but there is also the hidden invocation of teacher to pupil, seeking arousal of the intuition and an awakening of the will.

How shall we know when we have found the "axioms," and when matters should be left "undefined"? Well, an axiom is only an abstraction when left to itself. Its meaning grows from being applied. We must ask where the applications lead. Do they take one to self-righteousness and invidious distinction? Do they become a source of doctrinal security? If this is the case, then we may suspect that they are not axioms at all, or that they have been misapplied.

The search for truth can never lead to the formation of any kind of "orthodoxy" or common judgment of what is "truth" for other men. The search for truth is well on its way only when there is growing reliance on the capacity of others to see the truth in their own way, for themselves. The truth, in this sense, will grow common and public only when it is no longer insisted upon, when it is left to the egoity within every human being to discover. For the substance of truth, even communicable truth, to remain alive, must participate in awareness of the way it is found, and this gives it its "relativity" as well as its absolute character in depending, finally,

on the inner, subjective awareness of soul-perception. Truth so stated can never become a confinement of men's minds. It is of the same order of truth as that statement about "knowing" which Krishna makes to Arjuna in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

> When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then thou wilt attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind once liberated from the Vedas shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion.

This shakes to its foundations the *finality* of any communication that can be put into words. But it hurts not at all the value of all educational communications which are made to assist human beings to growth into greater knowledge. The work of the teachers, now more than ever, is to induce learners to self-discovery.

Another aspect of this subject is dealt with by H.P.B. in the closing paragraph of "What Is Truth?":

> Concerning the deeper spiritual, and one may say almost religious, beliefs, no true Theosophist ought to degrade these by subjecting them to public discussion, but ought rather to treasure and hide them deep within the sanctuary of his innermost soul. Such beliefs and doctrines should never be rashly given out, as they risk unavoidable profanation by the rough handling of the indifferent and the critical. Nor ought they to be embodied in any publication except as hypotheses offered to the consideration of the thinking portion of the public. Theosophical truths, when they transcend a certain limit of speculation, had better remain concealed from public view, for the "evidence of things not seen" is no evidence save to him who sees, hears, and senses it. It is not to be dragged outside the "Holy of Holies," the temple of the impersonal divine *Ego,* or the indwelling SELF. For, while every fact outside *its* perception can, as we have shown, be, at best, only a relative truth, a ray from the absolute truth can reflect itself only in the pure mirror of its own flame—our highest SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS. And how can the darkness (of illusion) comprehend the LIGHT that shineth in it?

THE USE OF DIAGRAMS AND SYMBOLS

> If too close attention is paid to the diagrams used in the *Secret Doctrine* to illustrate the scheme, without paying due regard to the explanations and cautions given by H. P. Blavatsky, the same error may be made. . . . This is further enforced by cautions not to rely on statistics or plain surface diagrams, but to look at the metaphysical and spiritual aspect of the theory as stated in English. . . . All diagrams on plane surfaces will only becloud the theory because a diagram necessitates linear divisions.
>
> —WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

SYMBOLISM has often been called the "language of the Soul," and major portions of *The Secret Doctrine* are devoted to its study. Diagrams are, at best, only visual analogies and direct their appeal to our reason. Symbols are multi-leveled universal images directed toward our intuition. Unless we make that distinction we may impede the growth of our intuitional faculties.

Perhaps we *can* look for a formal geometry in the shape of an atom or a snowflake that duplicates the geometric symbols on the pages of *The Secret Doctrine,* but these are simply evidences of the fact that physical forms are but limited translations of spiritual causes; limited by their two- or three-dimensional boundaries, but glorified by their spiritual generation. H. P. Blavatsky often speaks of the seven levels of symbolism, and when we find symbolic form in nature we are looking at only one level.

How then, do we make the distinction between a picture, a diagram, and a symbol? Perhaps we can make it clearer if we look at the diagram on page 172 of *The Secret Doctrine* I. If we look at the diagram as if it were a picture we are likely to think that the Earth and Moon chains are separate circling globes in space, and that each Lunar globe simply traverses a distance in space to take up a new position and function as an Earth globe. This is just the kind of error that Mr. Judge was concerned about. The separation of the seven globes in a chain in the diagram was a necessary expedient to show the sequential process by which the life energies of one globe after another are transferred to a new laya center to form the new chain.

As H.P.B. says, they are in *coadunition with each other but not in consubstantiality*. There, the diagram is not a *picture*.

It is not really a *symbol,* either. Its function is to illustrate only one aspect of a process. There is no suggestion that it has multiple levels of meaning. The diagram is just that, a diagram, and is subject to all of the limitations suggested by Mr. Judge's admonition.

On the other hand some very commonplace objects which we may often see in pictures and diagrams may also serve as very profound symbols. An example of such an object, often used in theosophic literature, is the wheel. On page 612 of *The Secret Doctrine* II, H.P.B. quotes, "Time moves on *seven wheels;* he has *seven* naves; immortality is his axle. . . ." Let us imagine a wheel for a moment.

In a revolving wheel the rim is moving the greatest distance per revolution and is therefore moving at the greatest speed in miles per hour. Thus a point on the rim would be moving twice as fast as a point midway along one of the spokes, while a point at the exact center of the axle would not experience movement at all because it is at the still center of the entire structure. Let's prove it mathematically. If our wheel has a diameter of ten inches and is revolving at ten revolutions per minute, we know that a given point on the rim is travelling at pi x D x 10 revolutions, or approximately 314 inches per minute. A point midway along one spoke would be travelling at pi x D (5) x 10, or 157 inches per minute. A point at the exact center of the axle would be at zero radius, would therefore have zero diameter, and would compute, pi x 0 x 10, or zero inches per minute.

Now if we imagine that the rim of the wheel represents time in the gross physical world, and a variable point on the spokes represents, for example, subjective time, while the axle represents the spiritual world—the prime mover of the entire structure—we can see one basis for the symbolism. The spiritual world moves the entire wheel, but is not itself moved. "I establish this whole Universe with but a single portion of myself, and remain separate." (*Bhagavad-Gita.*)

A yardstick used to measure time at the physical level would not be applicable to times measured at other levels. There are many other connotations for the wheel symbol. There might be a relation between the wheel symbol quoted above by H.P.B. and Ezekiel's wheel in the Bible. There is a relationship between the axle of the wheel symbol and the laya centers of world wheels, and to the

zero point referred to in the discussion of Keely's theories in the chapter entitled, "The Coming Force" (*S.D.* I, 554). The wheel also refers to cycles, periodicity, and reincarnation; and proper use of the symbol might throw much light on the principles of Karma and reincarnation.

Symbols are a valuable tool for spiritual growth, but like all tools their value is dependent on the skill and discrimination of the workman.

THE UNIVERSAL IN MAN

There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint had felt he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent.

Of the universal mind each individual man is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him. Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises. Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man it is the key to that era. Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again it will solve the problem of the age.

It is remarkable that involuntarily we always read as superior beings. Universal history, the poets, the romancers, do not in their stateliest pictures—in the sacerdotal, the imperial palaces, in the triumphs of will or of genius—anywhere lose our ear, anywhere make us feel that we intrude, that this is for better men; but rather is it true, that in their grandest strokes we feel most at home. We sympathize in the great moments of history, in the great discoveries, the great resistances, the great prosperities of men.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

YOUTH FORUM

Although Theosophy teaches that the astral body is the model for the physical, the average person may find little reason to transfer his sense of reality from the physical body to some invisible prototypé. What proof is there that the astral body is in fact a reality?

This question could easily be asked in relation to every fundamental tenet or doctrine in the Theosophical philosophy. Being a request for "proof," it is perhaps most frequently asked and most difficult to answer in its present form. The position of being asked to "prove" something is tied to a subtle psychological relationship between the people involved.

In any attempt at proof, it is usually assumed that the individuals involved are defining the same terms in the same way. Are there, then, any widely granted assumptions which support belief in an astral body, such as those in the past represented by myth and religion? If there are, they are not immediately apparent. Then, we might ask, are there any familiar terms in which we may discuss the question? There are, but they arise mainly in the biological sciences.

We really have here two questions: one concerning evidence and another concerning its acceptability as "proof." The evidence in behalf of the existence of the astral body may not *prove* its existence to inquirers. How does evidence acquire the force of proof? Of course, we could cite authorities, theosophical and others, who have elaborately argued the necessity for such an ethereal form; we could give inductive "scientific" and deductive philosophical reasons for postulating it. Then, to add symmetry, we might provide a brief historical sketch showing how this subtle form has had attention in serious thought from the day of Pythagoras and Plato to that of H. P. Blavatsky.

H.P.B. pointed out the need to recognize the astral body as a *principle*. She says in *The Secret Doctrine*:

> The whole issue of the quarrel between the profane and the esoteric sciences depends upon the belief in, and demonstration

of, the existence of an astral body within the physical, the former independent of the latter.

To conclude, we could list the causal functions of the astral as it affects the physical body. Reference here to Mr. Judge's articles, "Mesmerism," and "Sheaths of the Soul," would give the most instructive information available. Even so, all this will hardly have "proved" the existence of the astral body. Proof is an attempt to discuss a subject in terms of another person's sense of reality, and evidence submitted must fall within the radius of *his* "world." But if the best minds representing this age are slowly coming to postulate an ethereal form behind physical manifestation, why should an "average person" come to this conclusion with any less difficulty or thought? There is really no reason why he should "transfer his sense of reality from the physical body to some invisible prototype" until he has done the work necessary to discover this truth or felt the lack of not having such a hypothesis. There is no easy way to pierce the mysteries of subjective life and being—nor should there be. To deal with the "astral body" properly, our world must grow into understanding of a system of causal relations which lends meaning to *The Secret Doctrine,* and this is not going to happen all at once.

We could take as a model of explanation of abstruse doctrine any of the major works of H. P. Blavatsky or W. Q. Judge. *The Secret Doctrine,* for example, could be called a philosophical and metaphysical explanation of Reality which doesn't attempt to force the "proof" of any of its propositions.

What the teachers of Theosophy gave and what their pupils try to achieve for themselves is an awareness of the endless reach of every person's Being. This realization can be brought about only by exploring the possibilities that *might* exist in life. And even if the doctrines and ideas of Theosophy seem luminously clear to its students, their applications can be no more than working hypotheses to those unfamiliar with its scope.

GREAT NATURE

THAN the Circle, no better definition could be given of the natural symbol and the evident nature of Deity, which having its circumference everywhere (the boundless) has, therefore, its central point also everywhere; in other words, is in every point of the universe. "God is not a mind, but the cause that the mind is; *not a spirit,* but the cause that the Spirit is; not light, but the cause that the Light is" (*Pymander*).

The Universe was evolved out of its ideal plan, upheld through Eternity in the unconsciousness of that which the Vedantins call Parabrahm. Being is an endless cycle within the one absolute eternity, wherein move numberless inner cycles finite and conditioned. From Gods to *men,* from Worlds to atoms, from a star to a rush-light, from the Sun to the vital heat of the meanest organic being—the world of Form and Existence is an immense chain, whose links are all connected. The law of Analogy is the first key to the world-problem, and these links have to be studied co-ordinately in their occult relations to each other.

Spirit is matter *on the seventh plane;* matter is Spirit on the lowest point of its cyclic activity; and both are Maya. Esoteric philosophers held that everything in nature is but a materialization of spirit. The Eternal First Cause is latent spirit, they said, and matter from the beginning. While conceding the idea of such a God to be an unthinkable abstraction to human reason, they claimed that the unerring human instinct grasped it as a reminiscence of something concrete to it though intangible to our physical senses. With the first idea, which emanated from the double-sexed and hitherto inactive Deity, the first motion was communicated to the whole universe, and the electric thrill was instantaneously felt throughout boundless space. Spirit begat *force,* and force matter; and thus the latent deity manifested itself as creative energy.

It is on the right comprehension of the primeval Evolution of Spirit-Matter and its real essence that the student has to depend for

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NOTE:—A student's collation from standard Theosophical works.

the further elucidation in his mind of the Occult Cosmogony, and for the only sure clue which can guide his subsequent studies. Truly, one should study Occult philosophy before one begins to verify and seek the mysteries of nature on its surface alone, as he alone "who knows the truth about the qualities of nature, who understands the creation of all entities . . . is emancipated" from error. Says the "preceptor": "Accurately understanding the great tree of which the unperceived (Occult nature, the root of all) is the sprout from the seed (Parabrahmam) which consists of the understanding (*Mahat,* or the universal intelligent Soul) as its trunk, the branches of which are the great egoism (or Ahamship, which leads to every error); in the holes of which are the sprouts, namely, the senses, of which the great (Occult, or invisible) elements are the flower-bunches, the gross elements (the gross objective matter), the smaller boughs, which are always possessed of leaves, always possessed of flowers . . . which is eternal and the seed of which is the Brahman (the deity); and cutting it with that excellent sword—knowledge (secret wisdom)—one attains immortality and casts off birth and death." This is the Tree of Life, the Asvattha tree, only after the cutting of which the slave of life and death, MAN, can be emancipated. But the men of science know naught, nor will they hear of the "Sword of Knowledge" used by the adepts and ascetics.

Matter is *Eternal.* It is the *Upadhi* (the physical basis) for the One infinite Universal Mind to build thereon its ideations. Therefore, the Esotericists maintain that there is no inorganic or *dead* matter in nature, the distinction between the two made by Science being as unfounded as it is arbitrary and devoid of reason. Æther, in Esotericism, is the very quintessence of all possible energy, and it is certainly to this universal agent (composed of many *agents*) that all the manifestations of energy in the material, psychic, and spiritual worlds are due. *The Secret Doctrine* teaches that the whole universe is ruled by intelligent and semi-intelligent Forces and Powers. There is design in the seemingly blindest forces.

Nature taken in its abstract sense, *cannot be "unconscious,"* as it is the emanation from and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is the daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals *a consciousness of their own.* All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension. Matter has extension, colour, motion (molecular motion), taste, and smell, corresponding to the existing senses of

man, and by the time that it fully develops the next characteristic—let us call it for the moment PERMEABILITY—this will correspond to the next sense of man—let us call it "NORMAL CLAIRVOYANCE"; thus, when some bold thinkers have been thirsting for a fourth dimension to explain the passage of matter through matter, and the production of knots upon an endless cord what they were really in want of, was *a sixth characteristic of matter*. The three dimensions really belong but to one attribute or characteristic of matter—extension; and popular common sense justly rebels against the idea that under any condition of things there can be more than three of such dimensions as length, breadth, and thickness.

Everything that *is, was* and *will be,* eternally IS, even the countless forms, which are finite and perishable only in their objective, not in their *ideal* Form. They existed as Ideas, in the Eternity, and, when they pass away, will exist as reflections. *"Ideal nature,"* the abstract Space in which everything in the Universe is mysteriously and invisibly generated, is the same female side of procreative power in Nature in the Vedic as in every other Cosmogony. Aditi is Sephira, and the Sophia-Achamoth of the Gnostics, and Isis, the virgin Mother of Horus. In every Cosmogony, behind and higher than the *creative* deity, there is a superior deity, a planner, an Architect, *of whom* the Creator is but the executive agent. And still higher, *over* and *around, within* and *without,* there is the UNKNOWABLE and the *unknown,* the Source and Cause of all these Emanations.

The *Primordial Atom* (*anu*) cannot be multiplied either in its pre-genetic state, or its primogeneity; therefore it is called "SUM TOTAL," figuratively, of course, as that "SUM TOTAL" is boundless. That which is the abyss of nothingness of the physicist, who knows only the world of visible causes and effects, is the boundless Space of the Divine *Plenum* to the Occultist. Among many other objections to the doctrine of an endless evolution and re-involution (or re-absorption) of the Kosmos, a process which, according to the Brahminical and Esoteric Doctrine, is without a beginning or an end, the Occultist is told that it cannot be, since "by all the admissions of modern scientific philosophy it is a necessity of Nature to run down." If the tendency of Nature "to run down" is to be considered so forcible an objection to Occult Cosmogony, we may ask, how account for the phalanx around us of active stellar systems? Our Kosmos and Nature will run down only to reappear on a more perfect plane after every PRALAYA.

Three distinct representations of the Universe in its three distinct aspects are impressed upon our thought by the esoteric philosophy: the PRE-EXISTING (evolved from) the EVER-EXISTING; and the PHENOMENAL—the world of illusion, the reflection, and shadow thereof. During the great mystery and drama of life known as the Manvantara, real Kosmos is like the object placed behind the white screen upon which are thrown the Chinese shadows, called forth by the magic lantern. The actual figures and things remain invisible, while the wires of evolution are pulled by unseen hands; and men and things are thus but the reflection, *on* the white field, of the realities *behind* the snares of *Mahamaya,* or the great Illusion.

In India, and Chaldea, by the Chinese as by the Grecian Sages, these three Universes were allegorized, in exoteric teachings, by the three trinities emanating from the Central eternal germ and forming with it a Supreme Unity: the *initial,* the *manifested,* and the *Creative* Triad, or the three in One. The last is but the symbol, in its concrete expression, of the first *ideal* two.

There is frequent confusion in the attributes and genealogies of the gods in their theogonies, as given to the world by the half-initiated writers, Brahmanical and Biblical, the Alpha and the Omega of the records of that symbolical science. Yet there could be no such confusion made by the earliest nations, the descendants and pupils of the divine instructors: for both the attributes and the genealogies were inseparably linked with cosmogonical symbols, the "gods" being the life and animating "soul-principle" of the various regions of the Universe. Nowhere and by no people was speculation allowed to range *beyond* those *manifested* gods. The boundless and infinite UNITY remained with every nation a virgin forbidden soil, untrodden by man's thought, untouched by fruitless speculation. The only reference to it was the brief conception of its diastolic and systolic property, of its periodical expansion or dilatation, and contraction. In the Universe with all its incalculable myriads of systems and worlds disappearing and re-appearing in eternity, the anthropomorphised powers, or gods, their Souls, had to disappear from view with their bodies: "The breath returning to the eternal bosom which exhales and inhales them," says our Catechism.

Everything in Nature has to be judged by analogy. Though the highest Deities (Archangels or Dhyani-Buddhas) are unable to penetrate the mysteries too far beyond our planetary system and the visible Kosmos, yet there were great seers and prophets in olden

times who were enabled to perceive the mystery of Breath and Motion retrospectively, when the systems of worlds were at rest and plunged in their periodic sleep.

Everything in the Universe progresses steadily in the Great Cycle, while incessantly going up and down in the smaller cycles. For Hegel, Nature was a *perpetual becoming,* a purely esoteric conception. Man ought to be ever striving to help the divine evolution of *Ideas*, by becoming to the best of his ability a *co-worker with nature* in the cyclic task.

"Is the *Jiva* a myth, as science says, or is it not?" ask some Theosophists, wavering between materialistic and idealistic Science. The difficulty of really grasping esoteric problems concerning the "ultimate state of matter" is again the old crux of the *objective* and the *subjective*. What is matter? Is the matter of our present objective consciousness anything but our sensations? Theosophists and Occultists recognize a distinct vital principle independent of the organism—material, of course, as *physical force cannot be divorced from matter,* but of a substance existing in a state unknown to Science. There is a vital principle without which no molecular combinations could ever have resulted in a living organism, least of all in the so-called "inorganic" matter of our plane of consciousness. Occultism says that in all cases when matter *appears* inert, it is the most active. A wooden or a stone block is motionless and impenetrable to all intents and purposes. Nevertheless, and *de facto,* its particles are in ceaseless eternal vibration which is so rapid that to the physical eye the body seems absolutely devoid of motion.

The stars differ in their constituent materials and even exhibit elements quite unknown on earth; nevertheless, this does not affect the point that primeval matter—i.e., as it *appeared even in its first* differentiation from its *laya* condition—is yet to this day homogeneous, at immense distance, in the depths of infinitude, and likewise at points not far removed from the outskirts of our solar system.

"Entity" may be thought a strange term to use in the case of a globe; but the ancient philosophers, who saw in the earth a hugh "animal," were wiser in their generation than our modern geologists are in theirs; and Pliny, who called the Earth our kind nurse and mother, the only element which is not inimical to man, spoke more truly than Watts, who fancied that he saw in her the footstool of God. It is a Vedic teaching that "there are three Earths corresponding to three Heavens, and our Earth (the fourth) is called Bhumi." This

is the explanation given by our esoteric Western Orientalists. But the esoteric meaning and allusion to it in the Vedas is that it refers to our planetary chain, three "Earths" on the descending arc, and three "heavens" which are the three Earths or globes also, only far more ethereal, on the ascending or spiritual arc: by the first three we descend into matter, by the other three we ascend into Spirit; the lower one, *Bhumi,* our Earth, forming the turning point, so to say, and containing *potentially* as much of Spirit as it does of Matter.

It is said that the planetary chains have their "Days" and their "Nights"—i.e., periods of activity or life, and of inertia or death—and behave in heaven as do men on Earth; they generate their likes, get old, and become personally extinct, their spiritual principles only living in their progeny as a survival of themselves. It becomes apparent how perfect is the analogy between the processes of Nature and the Kosmos in the individual man. The latter lives through his life-cycle, and dies. His "higher principles," corresponding in the development of a planetary chain to the cycling Monads, pass into Devachan, which corresponds to the "Nirvana" and states of rest intervening between two chains. The Man's lower "principles" are disintegrated in time and are used by Nature again for the formation of new human principles, and the same process takes place in the disintegration and formation of Worlds. Analogy is thus the surest guide to the comprehension of the Occult teachings.

Nature is never stationary during manvantara. It is ever *becoming,* not simply *being;* and mineral, vegetable, and human life are always adapting their organisms to the then reigning Elements. "Just as a human being is composed of seven principles, differentiated matter in the Solar System exists in seven different conditions."

The whole range of physical phenomena proceeds from the *Primary* of Ether—Akasa, as dual-natured Akasa proceeds from undifferentiated *Chaos,* so-called, the latter being the primary *aspect* of Mulaprakriti, the root-matter and the first abstract Idea one can form of Parabrahman. Modern Science may divide its hypothetically conceived ether in as many ways as it likes; the *real* Æther of Space will remain as it is throughout. It has its seven principles, as all the rest of nature has, and where there was no Æther *there would be no sound,* as it is the vibrating sound-board in nature in all of its seven differentiations. This is the first mystery the Initiates of old have learned.

letters • questions • comment

The Theosophical philosophy presents a concept which is sometimes disturbing to students, namely, that the world about us is an "illusion." Since we live *in this world, is it not very real, and certainly of importance in the evolution of each individual?*

In considering any question, the best approach is to begin *where we are*—that is, to find within the question those elements which we can understand on the basis of our own experience and conviction. In this case one might ask several related questions. First, what does a man understand his own nature to be? Is he an illusionary being, a permanent being, or a combination of both? Then, what does he know of the world about him? Does his understanding of it depend wholly on sense impressions? Do all men view the world in the same way, and, if not, which is the real, or true, view?

Once we begin to ponder these ideas, it is apparent that they are links in a chain. In fact, it then becomes possible, by extending the resultant concepts, to present the entire philosophy in discussing a single question.

To begin with the individual, however, it is evident that a normal man is firmly convinced of his "reality." He will admit no argument on this score. Yet if for "real" we substitute "permanent" there will be some who express doubts. Not that they know for a fact that they are impermanent, but rather by virtue of their feeling that such certainty of permanence is not possible for a man to obtain. Yet, by a process related to Socratic dialogue, a man might be led to the idea that various aspects of his nature exhibit differing degrees of permanence or impermanence. Physiologically, the form is more lasting than its component elements: a breath may be brief, but the process of breathing endures throughout a lifetime. Similarly with all other bodily functions—they proceed through units of time. The same line of reasoning is applicable to other aspects of human nature, to the mental and emotional natures. Some thoughts and feelings endure a long time, others exist for only a flash. Nonetheless throughout all changes in the lifetime of an individual there re-

mains that consciousness which is uniquely his, and which makes it possible to add to his store of experience, yet which is not changed by any of the events it witnesses. Even if this consciousness is not granted immortality by the agnostics, it may at least be said to be the most nearly permanent of any aspect of man which can be considered by the finite human mind. In fact, to get a deeper understanding of the reality of man it is necessary to go beyond conventional mental processes.

Now, as to a man's view of that portion of his world which seems to lie outside or to exist independently of his presence, again there is great divergence of opinion. Even within the life of a single individual, the world-view may alter from childhood through stages of development to the mature thinking of old age. Has the world, as such, really changed, or has man's experience and resultant knowledge been responsible for his changed outlook? The following quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 40) is applicable:

> Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya.

The idea of Maya is basic to the question as stated, since Maya and illusion are used by students interchangeably, and in opposition to transcendental reality. *The Theosophical Glossary* defines the Sanskrit *Maya* as:

> Illusion; the cosmic power which renders phenomenal existence and the perceptions thereof possible. In Hindu philosophy that alone which is changeless and eternal is called *reality;* all that which is subject to change through decay and differentiation and which has therefore a beginning and an end is regarded as *maya*—illusion.

Does existence, then, rest on illusion? Or may it not rather be that in order to give the moment its due, man paints the transitory in colors of permanence? Can he take any action seriously, view any circumstance with thoughtful consideration, while remaining aware that "this too will pass away"? A man must strike a fine bal-

ance indeed between the dual aspects of existence, between the part played by the phenomenal world in the evolutionary process on the one hand, and the ultimate view that it represents but an ever-changing aspect of reality on the other.

A general discussion of this basic, epistemological question is given by H. P. Blavatsky in the section of *The Secret Doctrine* entitled "Primordial Substance and Divine Thought (I, 325). A passage of particular pertinence is as follows:

> As the modern Idealists would say, the co-operation of Subject and Object results in the Sense-object or phenomenon. But this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that it is the same on all other planes; that the co-operation of the two on the planes of their septenary differentiation results in a septenary aggregate of phenomena which are likewise non-existent *per se,* though concrete realities for the Entities of whose experience they form a part, in the same manner as the rocks and rivers around us are real from the standpoint of a physicist, though unreal illusions of sense from that of the metaphysician. It would be an error to say, or even conceive such a thing. From the standpoint of the highest metaphysics, the whole Universe, gods included, is an illusion; but the illusion of him who is in himself an illusion differs on every plane of consciousness; and we have no more right to dogmatise about the possible nature of the perceptive faculties of an Ego on, say, the sixth plane, than we have to identify our perceptions with, or make them a standard for, those of an ant, in *its* mode of consciousness. The pure object apart from consciousness is unknown to us, while living on the plane of our three-dimensional World; as we know only the mental states it excites in the perceiving Ego. And, so long as the contrast of Subject and Object endures—to wit, as long as we enjoy our five senses and no more, and do not know how to divorce our all-perceiving *Ego* (the Higher Self) from the thraldom of these senses—so long will it be impossible for the *personal* Ego to break through the barrier which separates it from a knowledge of *things in themselves* (*or Substance*). That Ego, progressing in an arc of ascending subjectivity, must exhaust the experience of every plane. But not till the unit is merged in the ALL, whether on this or any other plane, and Subject and Object alike vanish in the absolute negation of the Nirvanic State (negation, again, only *from our plane*), is scaled that peak of Omniscience—the Knowledge of things-in-themselves; and the solution of the yet more awful riddle approached, before which even the highest Dhyan Chohan must bow in silence and ignorance—the unspeakable mystery of that which is called by the Vedantins, the PARABRAHMAM (I, 329-30).

on the lookout

"Christian Century" and the Dirksen Proposal

Under the title "An Overdose of Dirksen," an editorial in the *Christian Century* (Aug. 17) rebukes Senator Dirksen and his supporters for capitulating to the demands of constituents for prayer to be brought back into the schools. These letter-writers, the editorial points out, know nothing of the complications involved, but the senators *do;* and if they can be pressured to support Dirksen only because "politicians cannot be against God and prayer in an election year (as they are quoted as saying) then their vote would be a cowardly and cynical use of their prerogative."

The editorial notes that since the Supreme Court decisions of 1962 and 1963 "American public schools on all levels have been freed from the onus of serving as liturgical or cultic centers." They are now free to *teach,* and to "leave what is appropriate to the churches to the churches." Further, the court decisions have "made possible a considerable extension of teaching on religious issues, particularly in higher education." The *Century* therefore feels strongly that if the Dirksen amendment should pass, the quickest way to force its repeal would be for people everywhere to insist that it be implemented in strictest conformity to its wording. Thus:

> We would support such action as the following: In a community where Latter-day Saints are in the majority we would encourage them to demand three hours a day of reading from the Book of Mormon. In every community where there is a Jewish majority we would advocate that Jews forget their civil libertarian instincts for a semester and demand reading of the Torah to the exclusion of the New Testament. And (don't faint) we would urge Catholic majorities (which would mean most white urban communities) to demand that mass be said on public school properties as part of the day's routine. Minnesota Lutherans, wherever they predominate, should demand that prayer rooms be built into new schools. Southern Baptists would be asked to forget their church-state convictions for the time and to demand that work in local post offices, courts and fire stations

and in all Internal Revenue Service, Social Security and Federal Bureau of Investigation offices begin each day with voluntary prayer by Southern Baptist laymen.

Reasons for this Advice

The editorial continues:

> We would encourage demonstrations by the National Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Council and the Central Conference of American Rabbis for representation of their devotional interests in every public school, every public place. We would solicit the support of Bahais, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses and countless other groups. In all this we would have one purpose: to use prayer to tie up the whole educational and governmental process until demand for repeal prevailed. By then people would understand the issues, and the "common man" who had been organized by one kind of pressure group would be heard from in response to other kinds of pressure groups.
>
> We anticipate criticisms of this policy. We will be told: "What you are asking for is illegal. You cannot do that to education, the public schools and public buildings." Not so. Should the Dirksen amendment pass there would be no legal recourse against any of the actions we have described. We would campaign for such actions because we feel that people have not envisioned these possibilities. They have not read the Dirksen amendment carefully enough, else they would know that things like these would appear and expand. . . . So this is our program if the Dirksen amendment passes. We will push its implementation to the hilt. We will help everybody get in the act until the people rebel and Dirksen cries "uncle."

The ensuing disruption of the schools would not last long, the editorial says. "A few days of such shenanigans, and people would get the point and schools could go back to educating."

Autonomous Psychotherapy

In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (Basic Books, 1965) Thomas S. Szasz explains the specifics of his method of "autonomous psychotherapy"—one that has qualities of interest to theosophic students. Ever since his *Myth of Mental Illness* (1961) Dr. Szasz has endeavored to dispel the idea that a person is "sick" merely because he needs psychiatric help in organizing and systematizing his life. "Psychoanalysis," says Dr. Szasz, "is not a medical treatment, but an education." Dr. Szasz cites the three levels of learning: (1) that which is restricted to a specific question and a definite answer—for

example, inquiring how to get to a certain place if one is in a strange city; (2) that which relies largely on self-help—as getting a map of the city; (3) that which involves self-help plus being told where to find certain points of interest and what to look for when they are found—"meta-education," Dr. Szasz calls it.

He correlates his *method* with a contract or a game, say contract bridge. The basic rule of the "analytic game" as Dr. Szasz plays it is that the patient owes only *money* to the analyst, and the analyst owes only his services *as such*. The goal of this type of psychoanalysis is full autonomy for the patient, and, since this is so, he must be given complete freedom of choice throughout the analysis. The aim is to help the analysand change from a heteronomous (dependent) person whose key expressions are "I can't," "I had to," "I couldn't help it," "I was ordered to," into an autonomous person who can say "I want to," "I decided," "I chose," "It was my fault."

Psychoanalysis—a Moral Encounter

The following shows the similarity of Dr. Szasz's aims to those of the "third force" psychologists, even though he does not use language with any particularity:

> If the psychiatrist is a medical specialist, which structure or function of the human organism is his domain, his area or special competence? The answer must be: the mind and behavior. But is the "mind" an organ, like the brain or the heart? And is human behavior a "function," like glucose metabolism or hematopoiesis? If we answer these questions affirmatively, we commit ourselves morally and philosophically, to regarding human beings as machines and therefore to treating persons as things.
>
> Nor should this view be rejected only on ethical grounds. It also happens to be false. "Mind" is an abstraction that helps us to describe certain human experiences, in particular the experience of self-consciousness. Although we have a concept called "mind," it does not follow that there exists a physical object or biological entity whose name it is. . . . The psychotherapist observes people, not minds. Accordingly, the psychotherapist does not "treat" mental illness, but relates to and communicates with a fellow human being.
>
> Psychoanalysis is a *moral exercise*, or if one wishes to put it that way, a *moral therapy*. Because it deals with the nature and value of varying styles of personal conduct, it could not be anything else.
>
> The aim of therapy is not to achieve "happiness" or even "well-being," but to learn about one's self and develop personal autonomy.

Biochemistry—Magic or Sorcery?

The *Wall Street Journal* (May 23) describes some experiments in brain chemistry involving what are called "intelligence pills." These "pills to make people smarter" have been given to a group of male students at the University of Michigan with results that will not be fully assessed for several months. Similar experiments at the University of California at Los Angeles, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a few other centers, are reported by biochemists who are convinced that they are "constructing a new theory about how memory works." This new theory, disregarding the electrical activity of brain function which was formerly linked to recall, relates memory to chemical reactions in the brain cells—specially to the presence of RNA, or ribonucleic acid. The *Journal* observes:

> Armed with new knowledge of how RNA might serve as the storehouse for memory, these scientists believe they may be on the threshold of major discoveries that would lead to chemical *manipulation of the brain.* (Italics added.) Even if the few compounds now being tested prove ineffective, they believe it is only a question of time before the right pills or potions will be synthesized to enhance memory and mental functioning. Such drugs could have both wondrous and, perhaps, frightening applications.

Dangers of Materialistic Trends

Supporters of the experiments claim such dubious benefits as "slowing down the process of senility," "better memory," and propose that "a memory-enhancing agent could be the biggest selling drug on the market." Other scientists, however, are impelled to give warnings. For example, Dr. Stanley Appell of the University of Pennsylvania, "complains that much of the research in the field has been more public relations than good scientific work." Some of it he describes as "black magic." And Dr. David Krech, of the University of California at Berkeley, wonders if such a breakthrough in control of the mind should be celebrated. At a recent scientific meeting he said:

> I don't believe that I am being melodramatic in suggesting that what our research may discover may carry with it even more serious implications than the awful, in both senses of the word, achievements of the atomic physicists.

Since such experiments involve not only drugs to enhance the memory but also preparations that can obliterate it, some of the

"awesome" implications become apparent. The *Journal* writer draws a parallel between the possibilities inherent in the misuse of such drugs and the "nightmare utopias" depicted in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*. He says:

> The ruthless rulers of *1984* went to great lengths to destroy all records of words, events and even people whose memory might prove embarrassing to them; they might well be interested in recent research indicating that, in animals at least, memory can be obliterated with chemicals. Today's researchers most certainly have no such ends in mind. Still, one does catch a faint whiff of the "brave new world" talking to some of them.

Theosophical Perspective

While "Chemistry and physiology," as H. P. Blavatsky observed in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 261), "are the two great magicians of the future," destined to show that all life subsists in a common matrix of matter, there remains the equal possibility that the new knowledge gained through these sciences will be made to serve the "reaction toward animalism" she warned against in her letters to the American Theosophists (*Five Messages,* p. 6). Useful and humane applications of science, as H.P.B. makes emphatically clear in "Black Magic in Science," are those which liberate the individual to independent choice, not those which treat the *psyche* as passive material for manipulation. She knew well, however, that the recognition of such higher laws of human good will hardly be accepted without prior acceptance of the great metaphysical truths which are at the root of the mental and moral evolution of mankind. This explains the overwhelming emphasis in Theosophical teachings on first principles and ethical and metaphysical doctrines.

An M.D.'s Warning

Another sort of warning against tampering with nature's processes is offered in the situation envisioned by Sir George Pickering, of Oxford University. (Newark *Evening News,* May 27.) Speaking at a medical symposium, Dr. Pickering warned:

> The goal of medicine is that of indefinite life, perhaps in the end with somebody else's heart or liver, somebody else's arteries, but not with somebody else's brain. Should it succeed, those with senile brains and senile behavior will form an ever increasing fraction of the inhabitants of the earth.
>
> I find this a terrifying prospect, and I am glad that I shall be dead and will have ceased to make my own contributions to this

catastrophe long before it happens.

> [We should] ask ourselves whether it is not time to halt the program of research and development which will make such a thing possible.
>
> It is at variance with the age-old ideas and ideals of the medical profession. Nevertheless, we must face up to the probable consequence of our ideas and ideals and be prepared to revise them. This is something which thoughtful folk should be expected to do, and have not yet done. It is time we did.

The Critical Moment of Death?

Swedish surgeons, also, are concerned about the ethical implications of organ transplants, according to the Scandinavian *Times* Newsmagazine for July. A case of kidney transplant in which both patients died brought on extensive discussion, resulting in the questions: Where in fact lies the threshold between life and death? At what moment may a vital organ be taken from one human being in hopes of the survival of another?

Dr. Clarence Crafoord, neurologist at Stockholm's Caroline Hospital, suggested that nothing less than a new definition of death is called for. His proposal:

> Man dies, as man, when his brain dies—and the brain dies when it has been severed from the circulatory system for 10 minutes. It has become medically possible to maintain organic life in persons who have lost all consciousness forever, letting the body live on as an organic apparatus. This is still "life" in the eyes of the law. I think wrongly. We shall soon have to draw the moral, legal and medical consequences of the great new promises extended by modern surgery.

Some Dimensions of the Problem

"Dr. Crafoord's conclusion," the account continues, "touched off a deeply probing debate in Sweden's medical community. There seemed to be partial agreement on one key point: it is easier to pinpoint the death of the brain than that of the heart. When an electroencephalogram shows only straight lines instead of the wiggly curves registered by a live brain, and when certain reflexes and pupillary reactions have been checked, it is possible to state with certainty that the brain can never again resume functioning—even though the heart can be kept going for a long time. That, according to Dr. Crafoord, is the decisive one of man's many deaths." A Dr. Curt Franksson added:

> I think Crafoord is right. But his definition cannot be applied overnight. Popular attitudes must be changed gradually. People will maintain that it is unethical not to try to keep a patient "alive" even though his brain may have stopped functioning. This is a general problem rather than strictly a medical one.

Dr. Crafoord's initial concern is reflected by Dr. P. C. Jersild, who observed: "Prof. Crafoord is entirely right. Our accepted definition of death is far too diffuse. Consider the human soul as the expression of life. The soul dwells in the brain, and all the rest are auxiliary organs. Thus when the brain gives out, you no longer have a human being."

Moment of Ultimate Death Varies with Knowledge

Although in the following passage H. P. Blavatsky is not discussing the ethical issues facing modern surgeons, several of the points she brings out have application here:

> The kabalists say that death occurs at the instant when both the astral body, or life-principle, and the spirit part forever with the corporeal body. The scientific physician who denies both astral body and spirit, and admits the existence of nothing more than the life-principle, judges death to occur when life is apparently extinct. When the beating of the heart and the action of the lungs cease, and *rigor mortis* is manifested, and especially when decomposition begins, they pronounce the patient dead.
>
> But [from the occult point of view] the man is not dead when he is cold, stiff, pulseless, breathless, and even showing signs of decomposition: he is not dead when buried, nor afterward, until a certain point is reached. That point is, *when the vital organs have become so decomposed, that if reanimated, they could not perform their customary functions. . . .* (*Isis Unveiled* I, 482-83.)

Not New, but Apropos

Now that there is so much emphasis on keeping the physical man "alive" by modern medical and surgical techniques, it is heartening to read (in the Los Angeles *Times*, Aug. 2) of doctors whose chief concern is in natural methods of delaying, or lightening the burden of, the aging process. Dr. Laurence E. Morehouse, of UCLA, is (according to the *Times* writer) "an unshakable advocate of exercise as a preventive of physical and mental dullness and perhaps even a shortened life." But it is not necessary, Dr. Morehouse believes, that a man of fifty should exercise in the same way or at the same pace he did at twenty, or at seventy as he did at fifty. Rather—

He believes the average person can keep fit simply by giving intensity to every-day activities. By walking upstairs briskly, standing up while taking phone calls, stretching on one's toes occasionally, watching posture, doing isometric exercises during leisure moments and putting zip into every movement, it's possible to keep from getting flabby.

Mind and Spirit Also Important

Dr. Arthur Cherkin, biologist at Caltech, agrees that "there is little reason to extend physical life if the person doesn't have the mental capacity to enjoy it." He adds:

> Like the connection between attitude and physical well-being, mental alertness and the amount of stimulation received by the brain seem to be linked. Some researchers believe that the reason old people respond slower is because their nervous system is not kept in as high a state of excitation as when they were young.

Most intriguing of all, however, is Dr. Morehouse's idea that "the spirit is important in the aging process." The statement, of course, is ambiguous, but the use of "spirit" at least suggests a psychological component of man's nature that is beyond the purely psychologic processes—a directing agent, as it were. Dr. Morehouse says: "The spirit builds its own body. If your spirit is slovenly and lazy, your body will take on the same characteristics. But if your personality is vital and adventurous, your body becomes the same way."

Merely Suggestive

An article on quantum mechanics in *Science,* May 27—"Current Problems in Particle Physics," by Edwin M. McMillan—may suggest to anyone accustomed to think of the "astral" as the *noumena* of physical phenomena how close to the astro-physical border particle physicists are working. After noting that the four "reactions," or forces of nature are (1) gravitation, (2) electromagnetic interaction, (3) the "weak" force holding atoms together, and (4) the "strong" force released by atomic reaction, Mr. McMillan goes on to say that "one thing lacking is that the carrier (W) of the weak force has not been found." "If the W does exist," he says, "it will have a quite large mass, several times that of a proton." Then:

> You may wonder how such a heavy particle can be involved in processes like the beta decay of the neutron, where the total mass involved is less than the mass of the force carrier. The answer is implied in a statement I made earlier, that particles can

> exert an influence even when they are in *virtual states,* which are states with total energy less than that corresponding to their mass. The process of production or *materialization of particles* can be thought of as a *transition from a virtual state to a free state.*

Another suggestive statement appears as Mr. McMillan answers two questions—What do we do in the face of this preposterous proliferation of particles? Are some more fundamental than others?

> There is no reason to think so; our greater familiarity with the proton and neutron can be attributed to their relative stability, due to their position at the *bottom* of the mass range, which can hardly be considered a fundamental distinction. There are two ways of thinking about this situation that are current now. One way starts with the idea that *there does exist a set of truly fundamental particles,* out of which the observed particles are made. If such a set should exist, it could consist of as few as three particles. (All italics added.)

"One by one the facts and processes in Nature's workshops are permitted to find their way into the exact Sciences. . . ." (*S.D.* I, 612.)

"The Pathology of Normalcy"

Dr. Erich Fromm, speaking at a conference in San Francisco (reported in *The New York Times,* April 14), urged psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers to "pay more attention to the public highways of the mind than to the byways of individual and family pathology." Dr. Fromm noted that in the past fifty years, the "instinctual drives," the repression of which Freud had found so important, have become less and less repressed. Now, says Dr. Fromm, there has been a change in *mores,* and sex and love have become part of the "consumer culture": "sex is something to 'get,' and love is something that if you don't 'get' it, you're deprived, like a baby without milk." What is repressed today, he says, is "the underlying anxiety, depression, loneliness, boredom and pain about the meaninglessness of life." Dr. Fromm explains:

> A man sits in front of a bad television program and does not know he is bored; he reads of Vietcong casualties in the newspaper and does not recall the teachings of religion; he learns of the dangers of nuclear holocaust and does not feel fear; he joins the rat race of commerce, where personal worth is measured in terms of market values, and is not aware of his anxiety. Ulcers speak louder than the mind.
>
> Theologians and philosophers have been saying for a century that God is dead, but what we confront now is the possibility

> that man is dead, transformed into a thing, a producer, a consumer, an idolator of other things.

Lacking a sense of egoic identity and karmic responsibility, and without the purview of soul evolution through reincarnation, it is very easy for a man to think of himself as a "thing," a mere pawn in the game of Life. The far-reaching purpose of Theosophy is to draw attention to the divine potentialities of every human being, so that each one may find the strength within himself to meet the karma of the age as an evolving *soul*.

The Beehive—an Organism

An article by Jean George in the *Reader's Digest* for June, "Nature's Most Astonishing Animal: The Beehive," states that researchers have discovered that the hive "is no mere collection of insects . . . but a single, pulsating, life-giving organism." Such a statement coming from modern scientists is almost as astounding in its implications as the subject they are investigating. The author writes:

> Today the beehive is . . . considered [to be] a single organism of many glittering parts. An infant when it is swarming, the hive progresses from adolescence to maturity, gives birth to new swarms, finally subsides into the quietude of winter. A wounded, starving or plundered hive can actually suffer, moan in agony, and then, in its drive to live, repair itself by a healing process like that of any other feverish creature. This concept is founded on a set of extraordinary discoveries. Any single bee, it is now known, can grow old quickly or, more unbelievable, grow *young!* The sterile can lay eggs; the senile can rejuvenate glands that have atrophied. A single bee can, in short, do the "impossible," in order to maintain the wholeness of the hive.

A wild hive contains from 20 to 40 thousand bees, among which are nurses, wax makers, guards, scouts, cell builders, hive cleaners, foragers for pollen and nectar, receiver bees who convert the nectar into honey, and bees that even air-condition the hive. Then, of course, there are the drones, who mate with the queen bee.

Normal Cycles Change Under Stress

Dr. G. A. Rösch, a German scientist, discovered that the age of the bees had something to do with their work: on the tenth day of a bee's 38-day life cycle, for example, one job was performed; on the sixteenth day, another. Later investigators, however, found that a beehive was extremely adaptable, as shown in the following experiment:

Mykola H. Haydak, now of Minnesota's Agricultural Experimental Station, removed the brood comb from a hive and isolated it. Then he put upon it newly emerged bees. There were no nurses, hive cleaners, guards, wax makers, foragers. He waited. The adjustment was violent! The entire developmental process was speeded up so dramatically that three-day-old bees took survey flights from the hive while others of this age built cells, a job normally for the 16th day. On the fourth day the bees collected pollen. After a desperate week the premature hive began to function as usual.

Need for a Theosophical Purview

The final question raised was a natural one: What stream of intelligence flows through the hive that tells its separate parts what to do? Lacking the theosophical concepts of hierarchical soul-intelligence in the lower kingdoms, of elementals and nature spirits, and of astral, prototypal patterns for species to follow, only an answer connected with food circulation in the hives has been accepted by apiarists. Theosophists, however, will find suggestive Mr. Judge's remarks about bees in the *Ocean*:

> The bringing back of knowledge [through reincarnation] also explains instinct, for that is no more than recollection divisible into physical and mental memory. It is seen in the child and the animal, and is no more than the result of previous experience. And whether we look at the new-born babe flinging out its arms for self-protection, or the animal with very strong instinctual power, or the bee building a cell on the rules of geometry, it is all the effect of reincarnation acting either in the mind or physical cell, for under what was first laid down no atom is devoid of life, consciousness, and intelligence of its own.
>
> As man came to this globe from another planet, though of course then a being of very great power before being completely enmeshed in matter, so the lower kingdoms came likewise in germ and type. . . . And in the coming from the former planet there are always brought with the first and highest class of beings some forms of animal life, some fruits and other products, as models or types for use here. . . . It may incidentally be said that neither the bee nor the wheat could have had their original differentiation in this chain of globes, but must have been produced and finished in some other from which they were brought over into this. (Pp. 86-87, 130-31, 133.)

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